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APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

KEVIN BREWER

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Orsett Psychological Services
PO Box 179
Grays
Essex
RM16 3EW

orsettpsychologicalservices@phonecoop.coop

PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS UPDATE

Psychology Teachers Update is designed to give a brief overview of the main developments in the different areas of psychology. There is a proliferation of journals and research, and it is very difficult to keep abreast of the latest trends, particularly in the many and varied areas of psychology.

Each issue of Psychology Teachers Update will cover a particular topic, and summarise the main research directions and findings in the last ten to fifteen years approximately. The aim is to give teachers the feel of what is happening in that area of psychology.

Psychology Teachers Update will appear three times a year in January, May, and September. Subscription costs £20 per year for three issues (or £7 each).

Forthcoming topics include consumer psychology; consciousness; and critical psychology and psychiatry.

AUTHOR

Kevin Brewer

Kevin is an experienced teacher of A level psychology since the 1980s. He has taught and examined with many of the different exam boards. He is a social psychology tutor with the Open University.

Author of three books published by Heinemann: "Psychology and Crime" (2000) and "Clinical Psychology" (2001) as sole author, and "Heinemann Psychology AS for AQA A" (2003) by David Moxon, Kevin Brewer, and Peter Emmerson. He is also one of the authors of Billingham et al (2008) "AQA Psychology B A2" published by Nelson Thornes. Kevin has published other material himself.

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INTRODUCTION

Stephenson (1996) felt that it is "in the nature of social psychology to be applicable".

There is a debate over what is applied and what is theoretical/basic/pure research, and where one ends and the other starts. "The traditional view has been that basic research is carried out to test hypotheses, while applied research is carried out to solve social problems" (Murphy 1996 p161) ¹.

What is applied and basic social psychology are "features of the observer's orientation. Furthermore, the same research can often be titled and described in basic and applied terms" (Jones 1985).

For convenience, applied social psychology will be viewed here in a narrow sense. Applied social psychology aims to take social psychology out of the laboratory environment. Theories developed in such environments are tested in real-life situations, and/or real-life situations are used to study social behaviour. For example, rather than study group behaviour using students and informal social categories, like courses and universities, applied social psychology would study "real" groups in society, like police and demonstrators.

What follows is a selection of examples of recent research that can be thus classed as applied social psychology, whether the authors would agree themselves.

CROWD BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES OF THE POLICE

Le Bon (1985) saw crowd members as losing control of their behaviour and being unable to resist the anti-social impulses of the crowd ("crowd contagion"). Thus the "mindless" destructive behaviour of crowds: an "ancestral savagery" released through a process like hypnosis (Hogg and Vaughan 2008).

While ideas based on Social Identity Theory (S.I.T) have viewed the crowd as "logical". Based on analysis of the riots in St.Paul's, Bristol, Reicher (1984) showed that "crowd members shift from personal to social identity in the crowd, and that control of behaviour passes from personal concerns to the norms, values, and beliefs associated with the relevant social category. As a result, the behaviour of crowd members is not unconstrained. Rather, they act within clear social limits and their collective acts display clear social patterns that reveal their collective understanding"

¹ There is also discussion over what constitutes applied social psychology, and whether it includes educational and clinical psychology, for example, as is the case historically (Murphy 1996).

(Cronin and Reicher 2006 p176).

This idea has been developed in the social identity model of deindividuation effects (SIDE)(Reicher et al 1995) which combines principles of SIT with those of deindividuation (loss of individuality).

SIDE argued that increasing the visibility of ingroup members or cues (like group symbols) increases immersion in the group, and thereby increases ingroup favouritism and outgroup discrimination.

This process is further enhanced where the outgroup has the power to sanction ingroup members. In other words, the ingroup bond together stronger when under perceived or real attack from the outgroup, and the ingroup emphasises its group norms and/or distinctiveness.

Put another way, the visibility of the ingroup increases support to each other, and encourages the expressions of aspects that draw sanctions from the outgroup.

A practical upshot of this theory is the reaction of the police (outgroup) to the crowd (ingroup), for example, "where the police act in ways deemed illegitimate in terms of crowd perceptions, or else stop crowd members from acting in ways they perceive to be legitimate, then conflict is liable to ensue" (Cronin and Reicher 2006 p178).

A large crowd is made up of individuals who identify themselves in different ways, and if the police treat all crowd members as a "homogeneous danger", this can encourage the crowd to identify as one and increase the potential for conflict.

However, at the level of individual police officers, all members of a crowd are treated as homogeneous simply because of the "rush of events" (Stott and Reicher 1998). This research involved interviews with 26 Public Order trained police concerning crowds in general and the Poll Tax "riot" of 31 March 1990, and "while officers perceive crowds to be generally heterogeneous in composition, in situations of conflict they also perceive crowd members as homogeneous in terms of the danger that they represent to public order and to the officers' well-being" (p522).

How senior police officers perceive a crowd was studied in a non-laboratory situation by Cronin and Reicher (2006).

Cronin and Reicher investigated the decision-making of senior police officers who commanded public order policing (ie: they were away from direct contact with the crowd). Ten senior officers were observed in a simulation exercise involving a scenario of 5000 anti-fascist demonstrators in a park in North London. The crowd was divided into a small number of "leading trouble-makers"

(category A), some people who would "readily participate in conflict" (category B), and others (category C). A scenario of rioting by 40 category A individuals occurred part way through the exercise. Full transcripts of the three and a half hour exercise were analysed.

Cronin and Reicher noted the police officers concerns about accountability to two different audiences:

a) External accountability to audiences outside the police force. This included the "community" seeing the police as too lax and letting violence occur, or too repressive and initiating conflict, as well as pressure from politicians.

b) Internal accountability to audiences within the police force. It was important to peers that police officers could control themselves and events.

Cronin and Reicher felt that these two types of accountability were being balanced by officers, even when contradictory, and these influenced the decisions made. External audiences were more important before conflict began, and the internal audiences after the rioting had started.

Another interesting finding from the exercise was how the officers perceived the cause of the violence or potential violence. Initially, the focus was upon the "pathological character of particular individuals in the crowd who therefore are unlikely to draw wider sections of the crowd into conflict, except, possibly, for their personal friends or 'mates'" (p188). When the violence started, the perception changed to see the whole crowd as "mindless", despite the rioting actually involving a small number in the exercise.

For example, one officer said: "If we go and arrest those [trouble-makers], that could inflame the others and they could cause trouble here or further on" (extract 11; p188).

And soon the whole crowd was perceived as trouble-makers - "We have to treat all 5000 members of the crowd as dangerous and liable to join in the violence against police" (chief inspector; extract 12; p189). This is the influence of Le Bon's idea of "crowd contagion".

"Note that the figure of 5000 dangerous people was not based on what people were actually doing and on how many showed evidence of being troublesome. Rather, the claim was that all crowd members are in principle potentially troublesome, and, hence, the only information that counts is how many people are in the crowd" (Cronin and Reicher 2006 p189).

Cronin and Reicher concluded that "any attempts to change police practices in the direction of more differentiated strategies and tactics must deal with the

more general view of crowds in society as well as the views of the police themselves" (p192).

TERROR MANAGEMENT THEORY AND THE SUPPORT FOR VIOLENCE

Terror Management Theory (T.M.T) (Greenberg et al 1986) can be used to explain why individuals enhance the ingroup at the expense of the outgroup. This process is a worldview defence mechanism. For T.M.T, the potential terror of mortality leads to an embracing of cultural values and group norms to hide from that.

"As cultural in-groups are the basis for the cultural worldview, the worldview based anxiety buffer can be protected by increasing one's identification with cultural in-groups as well as by protecting and strengthening the integrity of those groups and their respective world views" (Fritzsche and Jonas 2005 p573). From this statement, it can be predicted that individuals made aware of their mortality are more likely to endorse their ingroup and its values and go against the outgroup's.

Mortality salience (MS) (reminders of death) increases worldview defence. "Thus, when death thought accessibility is heightened, leaders who help people feel good about themselves by portraying their groups as undertaking a righteous mission to obliterate evil might be particularly alluring" (Pyszczynski et al 2006 p527). This has been studied in relation to support in the USA for measures in the "War on Terror".

Landau et al (2004) measured US college students' attitudes towards an essay praising President Bush's policies in Iraq (table 1). The MS condition was created by the statements: "Please briefly describe the emotions that the thought of your own death arouses in you" and "Jot down, as specifically as you can, what you think will happen to you as you physically die and once you are physically dead" (p1139). It produced greater support than a neutral condition (mean 4.16 vs 2.09 out of 5) as did thinking about September 11 2001 and the World Trade Centre compared to thinking about a future examination (mean 3.6 vs 2.2).

Pyszczynski et al (2006) investigated this further in relation to general support for extreme military solutions to the conflict in the Middle East among 127 Rutgers university undergraduates (95 women, 32 men) in the USA.

ESSAY

"It is essential that our citizens band together and support the President of the United States in his efforts to secure our great Nation against the dangers of terrorism. Personally, I endorse the actions of President Bush and the members of his administration who have taken bold action in Iraq. I appreciate our President's wisdom regarding the need to remove Saddam Hussein from power and his Homeland Security Policy is a source of great comfort to me. It annoys me when I hear other people complain that President Bush is using his war against terrorism as a cover for instituting policies that, in the long run, will be detrimental to this country. We need to stand behind our President and not be distracted by citizens who are less than patriotic. Ever since the attack on our country on September 11, 2001, Mr. Bush has been a source of strength and inspiration to us all. God bless him and God bless America" (Landau et al 2004 p1140)

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

"They were then asked to respond to three questions: "To what extent do you endorse this statement?" "I share many of the attitudes expressed in the above statement," and "Personally, I feel secure knowing that the President is doing everything possible to guard against any further attacks against the United States." All responses were made on 5-point scales (1 = *strongly agree*, 5 = *strongly disagree*). These responses were then reversed-scored so that higher numbers were indicative of greater support for the president" (Landau

Table 1 - Essay and response questions used by Landau et al 2004).

Participants were asked to either write about physical pain (control condition) or their recall of the events of September 11 2001 (MS condition). The dependent variable was measured by the level of agreement (1-5) with five statements including "It is entirely appropriate to engage in pre-emptive attacks on countries (eg: Iran, Syria, North Korea) that may pose a threat to the US in the future, even if there is no evidence they are planning to attack us right now". Support for extreme force was higher in the MS condition than the control one, but the effect was only found among political conservatives and not political liberals.

In another study, Pyszczynski et al (2006) investigated MS and support for suicide terrorist attacks on the USA among forty undergraduates (14 women, 26 men) at two universities in Iran. Participants were asked to think about dental pain or their own death. Then they were given "pro-martyrdom" or "anti-martyrdom" material (table 2) presented as answers to questions by fellow students.

After reading the two questionnaires, participants rated their agreement, and liking for the supposed

writers (1-9). MS was linked to higher "pro-martyrdom" support, and the control condition with the opposite (table 3). These findings were as the T.M.T predicted (ie: greater support for the ingroup and negative attitudes towards the outgroup).

QUESTIONS	PRO-MARTYRDOM ANSWERS	ANTI-MARTYRDOM
Are martyrdom attacks on the US justified?	Yes. The US represents the world power which Allah wants us to destroy.	No. Universally speaking, human life is too valuable to be used as a means of
Do you have a life motto?	One should treat all other true believers as brothers; everyone else should be considered enemies of	One should treat other humans with respect and care, no matter what racial, ethnic, or religious

Table 2 - Examples of "pro-martyrdom" and "anti-martyrdom" material used by Pyszczynski et al (2006).

	MS CONDITION	CONTROL CONDITION
PRO-MARTYRDOM	7	2
ANTI-MARTYRDOM	4	5

Table 3 - Evaluation of supposed writers based on condition (out of 9; higher score is more positive).

Pyszczynski et al (2006) concluded that "the fact that reminders of death produced dramatic increases in support for extremist solutions on both sides [US and Iran] provides chilling testimony to the impact of the fear inevitably produced by war and violence on such allegiances and supports the T.M.T contention that existential concerns about one's own mortality contribute to cultural, ethnic, and religious conflicts" (p533).

ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THE POLICE

The relationship between attitudes and behaviour is not necessarily one of consistency. In other words, individuals can express one attitude towards an object and then behave in a different way towards it. This is a problem for attitude researchers.

What about the relationship between the attitudes towards the police and the behaviour of initiating contact with them (eg: reporting a crime). Cheurprakobkit (2000) randomly telephone surveyed people in the Midland and Odessa areas of Texas who had had recent contact with the police (n = 115 in last two years). Those with a positive view of police (as rated on fifteen attributes like fairness, politeness, and quality of service) were more likely to have initiated the contact than those contacted by the police. This finding may not be that surprising because the latter group are more likely to be suspects (being arrested or being given a traffic ticket) than the former (reporting a crime or requesting information).

Hurst and Frank (2000) looked at who initiated the contact and the effect of the subsequent experience on attitudes towards the police among Ohio high school students in the USA. Not surprisingly, police-initiated negative contact had negative effects on attitudes, while positive individual-initiated contact had a positive effect. But police-initiated positive contact and individual-initiated negative contact had no effect on attitudes. It is still possible that the differences in experience, and attitudes, could be due to the nature of the police contact as a victim or a suspect.

So the need to focus upon one side only - those who are likely to initiate police contact. This has been done in relation to race and ethnicity. Studies (eg: Jefferson and Walker 1993) have found that Black people are less willing to help the police than Whites including giving witness statements and evidence in court.

Jefferson and Walker studied a sample of 171 Black, 199 Asian, and 271 White adults in Leeds. It used three hypothetical incidents of robbery, vandalism, and a serious accident. The difference was stronger for the first two cases (table 4).

It is not surprising that Black respondents were less willing to initiate contact with the police considering the poor history of race relations by the British police. Two key reports accused them of institutional racism after the Brixton riots in 1981 (Scarman 1981) and the death of Stephen Lawrence

(Macpherson 1999).

Scenarios:	BLACK	ASIAN	WHITE
Robbery	75*	96	92
Vandalism	48*	81**	66
Serious	95	99	98
Mean co-operation score	5.4	7.5	7.1

(* = significantly less than the others; ** = significantly more than the others)

(After Jefferson and Walker 1993)

Table 4 - Percentages willing to tell police based on three hypothetical scenarios.

In a literature review, Brown and Benedict (2002) found that attitudes towards the police were influenced by four variables - age (older adults more positive), contact with police, neighbourhood, and race.

Viki et al (2006) attempted to explain attitudes and behaviour towards the police using the theory of planned behaviour (TPB)(Ajzen 1985). This model includes a number of factors between the attitude and the behaviour (or intention to perform the behaviour). These factors are the attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms about the behaviour, and perceived behavioural control.

One hundred and twenty students (49 male and 71 female) were recruited from universities in south-east England, of which 56 were self-defined as Black and 64 as White ².

The behaviour being studied was the intention to co-operate with the police as shown with five hypothetical scenarios (eg: "If you saw someone being beaten up outside a pub"). Participants indicated how likely, on a seven-point Likert scale, they would be to call the police, provide witness statements, and give evidence in court.

The other factors within the TPB was measured:

- Attitude towards police - A seven-point semantic differential scale was used (figure 1);

² The researchers did not offer the option of "bi-racial" (p291).

"Providing assistance to the police is.."

GOOD	-- -- -- -- --	BAD
HARMFUL	-- -- -- -- --	BENEFICIAL
WORTHLESS	-- -- -- -- --	VALUABLE
USELESS	-- -- -- -- --	HELPFUL

Figure 1 - Semantic differential scale to measure attitude towards police.

- Perceived subjective norms of co-operating with the police - The level of agreement with five statements (eg: "Most people who are important to me would provide assistance to the police") measured perceived social norms around helping the police;
- Perceived behavioural control - Four items measured how much the individual felt in control of their behaviour (eg: "It is mostly up to me whether I assist the police").

The quantity and quality of contact with the police was also measured. There was no difference in the quantity of contact between the Black and White participants, but the Black participants did report less positive quality of contact.

Analysis of the questionnaires found no significant differences for perceived behavioural control, or willingness to report an incident to the police, but significant differences between the Black and White participants on the other variables (table 5).

VARIABLE	BLACK	WHITE	KEY
Provide witness statement	4.77	5.61	Higher score = more willing
Give evidence in court	4.52	5.34	Higher score = more willing
Attitude towards police	4.33	5.41	Higher score = more positive
Subjective norms	4.06	5.09	Higher score = greater social norms for co-

(After Viki et al 2006)

Table 5 - Means for variables with significant differences between Black and White participants.

Further analysis found that quantity of contact with the police significantly negatively correlated with

attitudes towards police ($r = -0.33$), while quality of contact significantly positively correlated ($r = 0.55$). Thus the better the contact with the police, the more positive the attitude towards them, and the more likely to co-operate with them.

Overall, attitudes towards police significantly predicted willingness to co-operate with the police in any form. Subjective norms had some effect, and perceived behavioural control no role.

Putting the results together, the intention to provide a witness statement and give evidence in court is influenced by attitude towards police and subjective norms concerning co-operation with police. These two factors were influenced by quality of contact with the police, which, in turn, was influenced by race. So Black individuals were more likely to have negative contact with the police, which produced a negative attitude towards the police, and social norms against co-operation, and thus the unwillingness to help the police.

In terms of the TPB, it was found to be partly useful in predicting behaviour (ie: attitudes, subjective norms), but not perceived behavioural control, while quality of contact was an important addition.

The quality of contact can be linked to the contact hypothesis as a means to reduce prejudice between two groups. Allport (1954) emphasised the importance of equal status contact for common goals with direct contact. Equal status is usually not the case between individuals and the police.

In the "extended contact hypothesis" (Wright et al 1997), indirect contact (ie: known member of ingroup having extended relationship with a member of the outgroup) can produce a positive attitude towards the ingroup.

SYMPATHY, DONATIONS TO CHARITY, AND GRATITUDE

Loewenstein and Small (2007) distinguished between "sympathy", which is "caring but immature and irrational (like the brainless scarecrow in The Wizard of Oz)" and "deliberation", "rational but uncaring (like the heartless tin man)" ³:

When these processes interact in an ideal fashion – when the tin man's brains channel the feelings of the scarecrow's heart—one observes the ideal of helpful aid directed to those most deserving of it. However, this ideal is rarely observed. More commonly, we get misdirected sympathy – the scarecrow's heart without the tin man's brains—or indifference in the face of ameliorable suffering—the tin man's brains without the scarecrow's heart (p113).

So the motivation to help can involve sympathy and deliberation in different ways:

- Sympathy only – an emotional response producing spontaneous aid without thought;
- Sympathy dominates deliberation, and a target receives aid beyond what it deserves (eg: over-giving to the identifiable victim);
- Deliberation only – a rational decision to help a charity;
- Deliberation dominates sympathy, and the individual gives without a feeling of commitment to the cause. This can produce fickle giving that concentrates on how deserving the target is.

Sympathy often goes hand in hand with empathy ("the ability to experience the feelings experienced by other persons"; Loewenstein and Small 2007). For example, Nordgren et al (2006) induced mental fatigue in a group of participants through straining mental tasks, and then asked them to read a vignette about a student who failed an examination. Severely fatigued participants were more likely to choose fatigue as the explanation for the student's exam failure as opposed to lack of discipline, motivation, or willpower.

³ Stanovich and West (2000) preferred System 1 (affect) and System 2 (analysis) modes of thinking.

Loewenstein and Small (2007) listed factors that influence sympathy:

- Past experience of same misfortune;
- Vicarious experience - someone close experienced that misfortune;
- Proximity to victim - in Milgram's (1974) experiments, less participants obeyed (to the maximum voltage) when the victim was 1.5 feet away in the same room, and when the "teacher" had to hold the "learner's" arm on the shock plate;
- Ingroup/outgroup membership and similarity of observer to victim;
- Newness - the first time that an event occurs it produces the greatest sympathy, but subsequently with each occasion the sympathy is reduced;
- Vividness - identifiable victims receive more donations than large groups (Schelling 1968);
- Stereotype of victims - sympathy is greater for female victims and children. Newspapers report that the victims of an event included "women and child" to "convey the sense that the calamity was especially bad" (Roy Baumeister, personal communication, in Loewenstein and Small 2007).

Table 6 applies these factors to an example of sympathy towards flooding victims.

IDENTIFIABLE VICTIMS AND STATISTICAL VICTIMS

The motivation to give money to charity is based more on emotions than calculated decision-making as shown by the amounts given to single individuals ("identifiable victim"; IV) than to large groups ("statistical victim"; SV) (Small et al 2007).

Why does the IV receive more interest and donations than the SV? One possibility is the "proportion of the reference group effect". This is an assessment of the relative effect of an event rather than the absolute number. For example, if a flood kills ten people, observers respond more with donations when the community was small as opposed to large. So ten deaths out of 200 people is a larger proportion than ten out of ten thousand. Single individuals are high proportion of a reference group (ie: one out of one) and thus elicit support (Small et al 2007).

FACTORS	MORE SYMPATHY AND AID	LESS SYMPATHY AND AID
Own past experience	Own house flooded last year	Never been flooded
Vicarious experience	Best friend's house flooded in past	Know no-one whose house was flooded
Proximity to victim	Flooding happened in next street	Flooding in another country far away
Similarity to victim	Members of ingroup/similar	Members of outgroup/not similar
Newness	First time flooding has happened	Happens regularly
Vividness	One person in particular suffered badly	Many people suffered
Stereotype of victim	Children suffer	Young, adult males

Table 6 - Factors influencing sympathy and help in a flooding situation.

Furthermore, an IV produces a strong emotional response. Both lab-based and field experiments have found that participants donate more when told that money will go to a specific victim rather than to a general fund. For example, Small and Loewenstein (2003) looked at donations to a charity called "Habitat for Humanity" which builds houses for needy families. Potential donators were either told that a family "has been selected" (determined condition) or "will be selected" (undetermined condition) for the next house, but not told who the family was. Donations were significantly greater for the former condition.

In a follow-up, participants were asked about their feelings towards the families. There were more positive responses to "I feel sympathetic", "I feel pity", and "I wish I could give them something to make up for their loss" in the determined condition (Loewenstein and Small 2007).

Maybe individuals need to be encouraged to think about their decision-making in giving to charity. Small et al (2007) set out to test this idea with four studies.

Study 1

This study compared donations to an IV or SV after telling donors that there is a tendency to give more to an IV. One hundred and twenty Pennsylvania students were

asked to fill out a general survey on the use of technology in exchange for five \$1 bills. On receiving the money, the participants were given a letter asking them to donate to "Save The Children" to relieve "the severe food crisis in Southern Africa and Ethiopia".

Half the letters contained the intervention statement (brief details of research about giving more to an IV)(table 7) and half did not (control group). Also half the letters focused on an IV with a picture of a little girl, and the other half used general data about starvation (SV)(table 8). The experiment used a 2x2 design with thirty participants in each of the four conditions.

"We'd like to tell you about some research conducted by social scientists. This research shows that people typically react more strongly to specific people who have problems than to statistics about people with problems. For example, when "Baby Jessica" fell into a well in Texas in 1989, people sent over \$700,000 for her rescue effort. Statistics - eg: the thousands of children who will almost surely die in automobile accidents this coming year-seldom evoke such strong reactions" (Small et al 2007 p146).

Table 7 - Intervention statement used by Small et al (2007).

Statistical Victim

"Food shortages in Malawi are affecting more than three million children. In Zambia, severe rainfall deficits have resulted in a 42 percent drop in maize production from 2000. As a result, an estimated three million Zambians face hunger. Four million Angolans - one third of the population- have been forced to flee their homes. More than 11 million people in Ethiopia need immediate food assistance".

Identifiable Victim

"Any money that you donate will go to Rokia, a 7-year-old girl from Mali, Africa. Rokia is desperately poor, and faces a threat of severe hunger or even starvation. Her life will be changed for the better as a result of your financial gift. With your support, and the support of other caring sponsors, Save the Children will work with Rokia's family and other members of the community to help feed her, provide her with education, as well as basic medical care and hygiene education" (Small et al 2007 p152).

Table 8 - Statements of IV and SV used by Small et al (2007).

Participants gave significantly more to the IV (mean

\$2.12) than the SV (mean \$1.21) overall, but the intervention significantly reduced the amount given to the IV (table 9). So thinking about the decision to give did have an effect.

	CONTROL CONDITION	INTERVENTION
IV statement	2.83	1.36
SV statement	1.17	1.26

(After Small et al 2007)

Table 9 - Mean donations (\$) in four conditions.

Study 2

The researchers were concerned that the results of study 1 could be due to "demand characteristics". The intervention stated that "people give more to IVs", and this could have "told" the participants what was expected.

Study 2 copied study 1 with ninety-nine new students, but varied the wording (framing) of the intervention statement as either "people give more to IVs" or "people give less to SVs". Again an IV was compared to a SV in another 2x2 design.

The framing of the intervention did not significantly change the results (table 10), and so "demand characteristics" can be ruled out in study 1. This is where finding non-significant differences between conditions is useful.

	"More" framing	"Less" framing
IV statement	1.00	1.37
SV statement	1.12	1.43

(After Small et al 2007)

Table 10 - Mean donations (\$) in study 2.

Study 3

Using 159 students this time, Small et al were interested to see if presenting IV and SV together increased donations. The three conditions here were IV only, SV only, and IV and SV together with the same "Save The Children" scenario.

The "IV only" received the highest donations (mean

\$2.38) compared to "SV only" (\$1.14) and "IV and SV together" (\$1.43). The researchers felt that in the last condition, the statistics "dampens the inclination to give to an IV.. because statistics diminish the reliance on one's affective reaction to the IV when making a decision" (p149).

Study 4

This last study compared emotional and calculated decision-making for donations to charity. The basic procedure was the same as the other studies with 165 more students. During the questionnaire, participants were either asked to work out some mathematical problems (calculation-priming condition) which encouraged rational thought, or to think about their feelings in reaction to the word "baby" (feeling-priming condition). Some participants were given the IV and some the SV information.

The calculation-priming condition led to less money being donated to the IV, but the feeling-priming condition did not increase the amount given to the SV (table 11).

	Calculation-priming	Feeling-priming
IV statement	1.19	2.34
SV statement	1.54	1.45

(After Small et al 2007)

Table 11 - Mean donations (\$) in study 4.

These findings have implications for charities, and, as the researchers said, "although victim identification may distort aid allocation somewhat, its impact generates more aid than any other pitch. Charities certainly recognise this, at least implicitly, when they employ a poster child to raise money for a general cause" (p152). In other words, IVs unfairly receive more than SVs, but at least people are giving.

Table 12 summarises the findings from the four studies by Small et al (2007).

The emphasis is upon helping, but there is also an issue of why individuals don not help in situations of genocide, for example, despite "the continued incantation or the words 'never again'" (Loewenstein and Small 2007). Slovic (2007) asked: "Why don't these massive crimes

STUDY	FINDINGS
1	People give more to an IV than a SV, and warning them about this fact beforehand, reduces the amount given to IVs, but has no affect on SVs.
2	The wording of the warning has no affect on giving to an IV or SV.
3	IV and SV information together does not increase donations; "IV only" is largest beneficiary
4	Asking participants to focus on calculations (rational decision-making) reduces donations to IVs, but focusing on feelings (affective decision-making) does not increase donations to SVs.

Table 12 - Summary of findings of studies by Small et al (2007).

against humanity spark us to action? Why do good people ignore mass murder and genocide?".

Though the answer to these questions is complex, Slovic believed that it is a lack of "feeling" about such events: "The numbers fail to spark emotion or feeling and thus fail to motivate action". The numbers that failure to produce emotion may, in fact, be small.

Kogut and Ribov (2005) asked participants to contribute towards life-saving treatment for either one sick child or a group of eight sick children. The amount needed for the treatment was the same in both conditions. Donations (and ratings of distress) were twice as great for the single child.

Vastfjall et al (quoted in Slovic 2007) used the procedure and materials from Small et al (2007) with Swedish students. There was an IV ("Rokia", female) and a male equivalent ("Moussa"), and a condition combining them both. Donations were the same for both children individually, which was more than for the combined condition. Self-rated feelings about giving showed the same pattern.

The decline in feeling for more than one victim is similar to "psychic numbing" (Lifton 1967) observed among rescue workers.

GRATITUDE

Gratitude is "a positive emotion that typically flows from a perception that one has benefited from the costly, intentional, voluntary action of another person" (McCullough et al 2008 p281).

McCullough et al (2001) described three elements of

gratitude:

- i) Benefit detector - it alerts individuals that they have benefited from another's pro-social behaviour. It tends to be stronger when the pro-social behaviour is perceived as motivated by benevolent rather than self-serving intentions;
- ii) Reinforcer of pro-social behaviour - expressions of gratitude reinforce the pro-social behaviour and increase the likelihood of them happening again. For example, the waiter writing "thank you" on a restaurant bill increases the size of tips (McCullough et al 2008);
- iii) Motivator of pro-social behaviour - the beneficiary is motivated to offer help themselves as a norm of reciprocity has been established. Experimentally-induced grateful participants are more likely to help the benefactor on an unrelated task (eg: completing a boring survey), and help a stranger than a non-grateful participant (Bartlett and DeSteno 2006).

Gratitude is a positive emotion whereas obligation "feels negative and uncomfortable", even wanting to avoid the benefactor (McCullough et al 2008).

It is proposed that gratitude evolved as part of "reciprocal altruism" (Trivers 1971)(you help me, I help you), or as part of "upstream reciprocity" (Nowak and Roch 2006)(you help me, I will help someone else). A prediction of these two theories, which has been confirmed, is that gratitude will be stronger with non-kin (McCullough et al 2008).

REDUCING PREJUDICE THROUGH CONTACT BETWEEN THE INGROUP AND THE OUTGROUP

After rioting in Oldham, Bradford, and Burnley in July 2001, the Government commissioned inquiries. One of them, the Cantle Report (2001) noted the "depth of polarisation" and the separate "parallel lives" of White and Asian residents of these towns. The lives of the different groups "do not seem to touch at any point let alone overlap and promote any meaningful interchanges". A major recommendation was "cross-culture contact between different communities at all levels" (quoted in Dixon 2007).

Simple contact with the outgroup, however, does not automatically reduce prejudice for the ingroup. In fact, contact can increase prejudice in some cases. For example, a survey of attitudes in Britain (Lemos 2005) found that the more multi-racial the population of the area, the more negative the inhabitants' views of "race".

Over 20% of young people replied "yes" to the question, "Are there any particular racial communities or groups of people that you dislike?" in Stafford (not racially diverse area) compared to over 40% in Peterborough (racially diverse area).

Allport (1954) emphasised that contact between the groups should be:

- Regular;
- Of equal status;
- Balanced between numbers of ingroup and outgroup members;
- Free from competition;
- Towards common goals;
- Viewed as normal and thus institutionally supported;
- Involve counter-stereotypic individuals;
- Such that relationships can develop between individuals ("acquaintance potential"; Dixon 2007).

Despite the criticisms of the "laundry list" of factors (Pettigrew 1986), the contact hypothesis is established as "one of psychology's most effective strategies for improving relations" (Dovidio et al 2003).

Dixon (2007) listed the key criticisms of the contact hypothesis:

i) Idealistic - Much of the research for the ideal conditions for contact has been lab-based and artificial, and thus not related to the reality of everyday group conflict. White and Asian residents' experiences in Oldham, for example, are very different to experiments

asking students to form groups based on arbitrary criteria.

ii) "Theoretical individualism" - Meeting an individual from the outgroup can lead to the perception of them as "exceptions to the rule" rather than to changing the whole view of the group.

iii) Ignoring shared history of the groups - Day to day contact with individual members of the outgroup is different to the shared group identity based on social and historical factors. Real-life group conflicts tend to have a long history with key events that encourage the ingroup to bond, and increase the antagonism towards the outgroup.

iv) Contact is not always a good thing - The meaning of contact between the groups is also important. Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins (2006) found, that for some British Muslims, separation from the mainstream society was desirable because it is perceived as decadent. If "contact is seen as threatening the extent to which members are able to to preserve valued forms of religious expression, then it is unlikely to have a beneficial impact on social relations" (Dixon 2007 p166).

The social meaning of groups, identity, and conflict are explored by a discursive approach to racism (eg: Wetherell and Potter 1992).

IDENTITY AND CONFLICT

The discursive approach to racism concentrates on the role that negative attitudes towards the outgroup ("Other") plays in the construction of identity, both individual and ingroup.

McIntosh et al (2004) showed this process in the case of thirty English-born individuals living in Scotland. A number of themes emerged from analysis of the interviews.

i) "I always feel very English" - Being different (the minority) made the individual aware of being English. "Thus simply 'being', or perhaps more accurately to be seen to be, 'English' meant that the national identity of many of those interviewed was put up for discussion, cast up as a subject for debate and scrutiny on a regular, even daily basis" (p47).

ii) "A lot of people squirm about English accents" - Another way that the interviewees were aware of not being Scottish was the reaction to their accent which was perceived as "being 'upper' or 'middle class', 'posh', 'arrogant', 'snobby', 'individualistic' or 'right wing'"

(p49).

iii) It's the English rather than an English person"
- The interviewees reported comments based on "degrees-of-Englishness", and the negative feelings towards the English as a category rather than towards an individual: a "kind of generalised antipathy you know which isn't directed at one personally" (male respondent)(p50).

McIntosh et al felt that "an important part of the Scottish national identity, even post-devolution, continues to be that it precisely not 'English'" (pp52-53). Any conflict with the English was not necessarily a dislike for the English as much as a positioning of what it is to be Scottish. The discursive approach views group conflict in relation to identity rather than simply as intergroup conflict like the earlier theories of prejudice.

COLOUR BLINDNESS: NOT NOTICING A PERSON'S SKIN COLOUR

Apfelbaum et al (2008) began their article with this story:

Not long ago, one of the authors attended an engagement party. While mingling he happened upon a conversation with a guest who mentioned that she had just met the fiancée but could already tell that she was delightful. The author agreed and added that the hosts – a tall, red-haired, White man from New England and a short, Black woman from the southern United States – made a unique couple given their different backgrounds. The guest, a White female, was taken aback by this comment, saying that she did not think that the couple's racial background was relevant and that she had not even considered that the fiancée was Black until that very moment. Her reaction was sobering – the author worried that his remark had been insensitive – but it was also suspect: After all, he had simply alluded to "different backgrounds," and it was she who had interpreted the comment in terms of race. Nonetheless, she clearly believed that talking about race or even acknowledging racial difference was inappropriate in this setting (p918).

Norton et al (2006) described the situation where White individuals in the USA do not mention a person's race when describing a Black individual. The authors called this "colour blindness", and it is based on the assumption, "If I do not notice race, then I cannot be racist".

Norton et al asked, "Why would simply mentioning someone's race serve as evidence of bias? There is, after all, nothing inherently racist about noticing race. But in a culture where motivations to avoid appearing prejudice are increasingly pervasive.. and few labels are as aversive as that of 'racist'.., colour blindness can serve as a useful strategem.." (p949).

In fact, the authors proposed that "the incongruity between trying to appear colour blind while automatically noticing colour complicates strategic efforts to appear unbiased, creating an inevitable tension between efforts to achieve colour blindness and actual success at doing so" (Norton et al 2006 p949).

In their first study, Norton et al (2006) recruited 57 White students to test this conflict. The participants were asked to sort twenty-four photographs of faces based on one of seven dimensions (male/female, Black/White, smiling/not, over 30/under 25, blue/red background to photograph, light/dark hair colour, facial hair: present/absent). The speed of response was measured, and this was taken as an individual's ability to categorise faces. The key dimension was, obviously, Black/White, and the others were there to hide the purpose of the experiment. Categorising the face by race was the third fastest dimension out of the seven. That was the sorting condition.

In the hypothetical condition, participants were asked to estimate their reaction time in the sorting task (without knowing their actual results). The estimate of race came out as the sixth fastest of seven. The researchers took this as an individual's reluctance to admit that they categorise faces based on race.

The same experiment was used with twenty-two Black participants. In the sorting condition, the reaction times were comparable to the White participants for categorising the faces based on race. But in the hypothetical condition, the Black participants estimated their reaction time to the race of the face as significantly faster than White participants.

Norton et al's (2006) second study investigated the implications of White participants' reluctance to admit awareness of race. Thirty White students were paired with a Black or White female confederate. The real participants was always the questioner and the confederate the answerer in a communication game through a rigged random drawing of names. The task of the game was to discover the gender, race, or background colour of facial photographs. But only the answerer could see the photographs, and they were allowed to answer "yes" or "no". The aim was to use as few questions as possible.

The questions asked by the real participants varied

with the race of the confederate. White participants asked about the race of the face in the photograph on 93% of trials with a White confederate, but only on 64% of trials with a Black confederate. The upshot was that in the latter case, it took significantly longer (ie: more questions asked) to discover the race of the face (average 6.69 vs 6.28 questions).

The game was videotaped and the non-verbal behaviour of the White participants observed and scored by independent judges. Individuals trying to be colour blind interacted with the Black confederate in a less friendly way (eg: less eye contact).

Apfelbaum et al (2008) felt that individuals had a limited cognitive capacity which was taken up with concentrating on not mentioning race, and thus had less resources to control non-verbal behaviour.

Furthermore, attitudes towards discussing skin colour were measured. Individuals who agreed with the statement, "When I interact with other people, I try not to even notice the colour of skin", were less likely to ask about the race of the face in the photographs compared to White individuals who agreed with the statement, "If everyone paid less attention to race and skin colour, we would all get along much better".

The desire to appear unprejudiced in inter-racial interactions led to poor performance on the communication game. Norton et al (2006) did not see this as evidence of racism (particularly hidden or implicit) among Whites in the USA, rather it reflects "a desire among Whites to be more egalitarian.. a step in the right direction toward the amelioration of racial bias. We suggest, however, that the end result of pursuing this goal through mere colour blindness may be more complicated than previously thought" (p952).

Norton et al's (2006) research showed the discrepancy between perception and acknowledgement of racial difference, which is now called "strategic colour blindness" (Apfelbaum et al 2008). This would suggest that such behaviour is part of self-presentation (maintaining face)⁴, and influenced by social norms.

Apfelbaum et al (2008) replicated Norton et al's (2006) second study, but added an extra condition where the confederates mentions race first, and thereby sets a social norm of the acceptability of talking about race.

⁴ Condor et al (2006) suggested that "social actors may act strategically to protect not only their face as individuals, or even the reputation of groups with which they personally identify, but also the identity of their dialogic partners.." (p444). In other words, individuals are concerned about prejudice denial and mitigation in a complex way during social interactions. The researchers used discourse analytic techniques to explore real-life conversations about racism.

In this "race-acknowledged" condition, White participants were much more likely to ask a Black confederate about the race of the face in the photographs (95.3% of trials) compared to the original condition (10.3%).

In a further study, Apfelbaum et al (2008) investigated Black and White students' perceptions of colour blind behaviour. Based on the videotapes from previous studies, actors reproduced the behaviour of participants in the communication game. Participants now watched videotapes of the actors and rated the behaviour. The White participants rated the actors showing colour blind behaviour (ie: not asking about the race of the face in the photograph) as less prejudiced, and perceived it as appropriate in "race-relevant interactions", while Black participants perceived the same behaviour as an indication of prejudice. However, Black participants rated colour blindness behaviour as positive when race was less relevant to the interaction.

Apfelbaum et al (2008) concluded: "One practical implication of these findings for intergroup relations is straightforward in situations where race is potentially relevant, Whites who think that avoiding race altogether will shield them from being perceived as biased should think again" (p930).

PSYCHOLOGY OF CONSPIRACY THEORIES

The Internet is full of conspiracy theory sites, but that does not mean such ideas are new. The belief that "they" (evil secret powers) are behind events has a long history. For example, at the end of the eighteenth century, certain writers blamed the French Revolution on the clandestine machinations of the "Illuminati"⁵ (Byford and Billig 2001).

Many conspiracy theories, like stereotypes, have some element (or kernel) of truth behind them. For example, some African-Americans believe that the AIDS virus was created in secret US Government laboratories and deliberately given to Black people. Such a belief is not as wild in the context of the Tuskegee experiment (Thomas and Quinn 1991). In May 1997, the US Government compensated a number of families of African-Americans and formally apologised for a project began in 1932 in the Alabama town of Tuskegee. Four hundred African-American men were deliberately infected with syphilis, without their knowledge or consent, to see the effect of the disease untreated. This experiment continued until 1972, when a journalist discovered it, despite the arrival of penicillin to cure syphilis in 1947 (Gruter 2004).

The number of people who believe in certain conspiracies is large, particularly in the USA. For example, only 14% of respondents believed that Lee Harvey Oswald killed President J.F Kennedy alone (official explanation), while 69% thought others were involved (Goertzel 1994).

There are a number of processes in building a conspiracy:

- Belief that nothing happens by chance;
- Dismiss existing and "official" explanations or discredit officials;
- Relate together seemingly unrelated events;
- Name an enemy with evil intentions;
- Place the emphasis on the "official" explanation to prove itself rather than the minority one.

In the classic work on rumours, during World War II, Allport and Postman (1945) identified three processes, which are relevant here:

⁵ The "Illuminati" in conspiracy literature means a small elite that secretly control the planet. Other terms used include the "Committee of 300" or the "Olympians" (Byford and Billig 2001).

- i) Levelling - the rumour becomes less detailed and less complex with time;
- ii) Sharpening - certain features of the rumour are emphasised and exaggerated;
- iii) Assimilation - the rumour becomes distorted to fit existing beliefs, prejudices, ideas, and agendas.

Bartlett's (1932) work with "The War of the Ghosts" story is also relevant.

There are a number of psychological ideas that are relevant to understanding individuals who believe in conspiracy theories.

1. Mental illness and delusions

Individuals with psychotic disorders, like schizophrenia, hold delusional beliefs. These are beliefs that the individual maintains despite a lack of evidence, or plenty of contrary evidence, even if no one else believes the same thing.

There are many individuals believing in conspiracy theories, so it is unlikely that they are all psychotic. However, delusional the beliefs, the individuals may be showing the "Martha Mitchell effect" (Gruter 2004). This is named after the wife of a US politician who defended her husband during the Watergate scandal in 1972. She was accused of being delusional by other politicians, but eventually was proved to be right.

2. Cognitive overload

"Humans tend to drastically simplify complicated issues, reducing them to a lone cause whenever possible. This exercise brings order out of chaos; it makes a complex world intelligible" (Gruter 2004 p70).

The processes of perceptual organisation and social perception mean that the brain is looking for patterns and finding meaning among the vast amount of information received by the senses. To avoid cognitive overload, simplifying techniques, like stereotyping, are used.

3. Spurious cause and effect

Part of making sense of the world is to link events in terms of cause and effect. Where there is no relationship, this is known as the "illusion of causality", which is an attributional bias also seen in interpreting events as paranormal or psychic (Blackmore

1998).

Conspiracy theorists often look at a consequence of an event (the effect) and argue that it was the cause of what happened beforehand (the real cause). This is a "reversal of cause and effect" (Gruter 2004). So, for example, the World Trade Centre attack on September 11 2001 led to the "War on Terror" (cause to effect). But the desire for the "War on Terror" is seen as the cause, and thus a Government plot borne for the World Trade Centre attack ⁶.

4. Confirming existing prejudices

Many conspiracy theories relate back to existing prejudices, and, in fact, are used as evidence to confirm such views. One such prejudice is anti-Semitism. In 1173, Thomas of Monmouth (a Benedictine monk) claimed in his book, "The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich", that a twelve year-old Christian boy had been ritually sacrificed by Jews. This idea reappeared in "The Talmud Jew" by August Rohling in 1871. A similar publication called "The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion" (origin unclear, but possibly published in Russia in the nineteenth century) claimed a conspiracy by Jews and Freemasons to take over the world (Gruter 2004).

Byford and Billig (2001) explored the development of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories of Western government policies in Serbia in June 1999, at the end of the war with NATO. A Belgrade daily newspaper blamed the "Bilderberg Group" as plotting for world domination including the subjugation of Yugoslavia (Serbia). This is an example of a "world elite conspiracy theory", which, for many conspiracy theorists, means a "deeper, hidden Jewish plot".

Among some of the writers of conspiracy theories here there is the reference to mystical events. For example, French President Mitterrand was referred to as one of the "seven bald-headed rulers of the world" in a prophecy by Nostradamus, or that www (Internet address) according to the numerical coding of the Jewish alphabet corresponds to 666 (as in the Book of Revelations in the New Testament) (Byford and Billig 2001).

The most extreme anti-Semitic language came from one Serbian conspiracy writer, Ratibor Durdevic: "All modern European ideas were invented by Jews.. democracy, and strikes, and socialism, and atheism, and religious tolerance, and pacifism, and global revolution, and capitalism, and communism. All of them are the inventions

⁶ See http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/conspiracy_files/.

of Jews, or rather their father, the Devil" (Durdevic 1999 quoted in Byford and Billig 2001 p61).

This link between "Satanic forces, the development of western civilization and an anti-Christian conspiracy constitutes a legacy of the semantic link between Satanism and Judaism inherent in a classical conspiratorial discourse" (Byford and Billig 2001 p61).

5. Susceptibility to conspiracy theories

General dissatisfaction and mistrust of government officials/politicians is associated with the susceptibility to believe in conspiracies. Goertzel (1994) telephoned 348 New Jersey residents to assess the truth of ten conspiratorial legends (eg: "The Air Force is hiding evidence that the United States has been visited by flying saucers" and "The American government deliberately put drugs into the inner city communities") (all untrue). Table 13 lists the three most popular conspiracies in terms of "definitely true" replies. Dissatisfaction ("anomia" ⁷) was correlated with seeing a greater number of legends as true.

CONSPIRACY	PERCENTAGE OF REPLIES
1. "Ronald Reagan and George Bush conspired with the Iranians so that the American hostages would not be released until after the 1980 elections".	16
2. "The Japanese are deliberately conspiring to destroy the American economy".	16
3. "The Air Force is hiding evidence that the United States has been visited by flying	12

Table 13 - Three most popular conspiracies based on "definitely true" responses in Goertzel (1994).

At a social level, unusual, unforeseen or traumatic events can make individuals vulnerable to conspiratorial explanations of historical and political events, as in post-war Serbia in 1999 (Byford and Billig 2001).

Not all conspiracy thinking is the same. Goertzel

⁷ "Anomia" made up of items that measured the belief that the situation of the average person is getting worse, that it is hardly fair to bring a child into today's world, and that most public officials are not interested in the average man (Goertzel 1994).

(1994) distinguished between monological and dialogical conspiracy theories and thinkers. The latter are open to debate and testable by evidence. The former produce the same explanation for every problem: "the X conspiracy has been responsible for all of our other problems so it is obvious that they must be responsible for this one as well".

STEREOTYPE THREAT AND PERFORMANCE ON TESTS

Stereotype threat (ST) is the idea that an individual's performance is negatively influenced by the stereotype of the social group they belong to. For example, a woman doing a mathematics test, where the stereotype is that women do poorly (compared to men), will score badly. This is particularly so if the woman is alerted to the stereotype before the test compared to those not told (Beilock et al 2007). As well as tests ST can be applied to sports performance.

Steele and Aronson (1995) first noted the phenomenon with high-achieving African-American students at Stanford University performing badly on tests when they believed it was an intelligence test (where the stereotype is of poor performance by African-Americans). This is ingroup inferiority. The opposite to ST is stereotype lift (SL), and White participants do better when told a test is of intelligence. This is outgroup inferiority (table 14).

PHENOMENON	INGROUP/OUTGROUP	PERFORMANCE
Stereotype threat	Ingroup inferiority/	Poor
Stereotype lift	Ingroup superiority/	Good

Table 14 - Stereotype threat and stereotype lift.

One explanation of ST relates to cognitive overload. Individuals used up their cognitive capacity thinking about the stereotype, and this reduces the capacity to perform the task, and thus the decline in ability. If individuals learn answers to questions by rote (using long-term memory), this is not affected by ST (Beilock et al 2007).

But this explanation is challenged by work from Shih et al (1999), for example. They tested Asian female students in the USA on a mathematics test. Those who were told to concentrate on the fact of being a female student did poorly (ST compared to men), but when they concentrated on being Asian, performance improved (SL

compared to other ethnic groups in the USA).

Cognitive overload cannot explain this difference in performance as well as ST/SL in sports events where cognitive capacity not important, like golf, and where stereotypes of multiple groups are involved (Haslam et al 2008). Also not all individuals are affected by the processes.

ST/SL has been explained in relation to identity and the Social Identity Theory (SIT). In the SIT individuals internalise the ingroup's stereotyped status (eg: good at mathematics) and this influences their individual behaviour. If the individual wants to do well in mathematics and their ingroup is stereotyped as good at mathematics, they will do well (SL), but if the ingroup is stereotyped as bad at mathematics, this produces conflict and causes the poor performance (ST)(Haslam et al 2008).

This explanation does allow the individual the opportunity to combat the negative stereotypes of their ingroup in a number of ways (Haslam and Reicher 2006):

- "Social mobility" - The individual accepts the prevailing stereotype but does not apply it to self; eg: "we are poor at mathematics, but I am not like that";
- "Social creativity" - The individual focuses upon positive ingroup traits, but still does not challenge the prevailing stereotype; eg: "we are poor at mathematics, but we are good at art";
- "Social competition" - The group challenges the stereotype; eg: "we do not accept that we are poor at mathematics".

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